



Transmitted via Electronic/Email

February 14, 2023

The Honorable Joe Manchin
 United States Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Designating Copper as a Critical Mineral

Dear Chairman Manchin:

The Women’s Mining Coalition (WMC) would like to thank you and your colleagues for sending the February 2nd letter to Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, requesting that she direct the U.S. Geological Survey to add copper to the critical minerals list. As your letter correctly explains, recent events like the war in Ukraine have heightened the need to strengthen the Nation’s critical minerals supply chains in order to reduce our dangerous reliance on foreign adversaries for the minerals essential to our national defense, economy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and technology sectors, and to our clean energy future.

The chart below from the World Bank Group’s May 2020 report entitled *Minerals for Climate Action* emphasizes the importance of copper, which is needed for all types of energy infrastructure.

	Wind	Solar photovoltaic	Concentrated solar power	Hydro	Geothermal	Energy Storage	Nuclear	Coal	Gas	Carbon capture and storage	Import Reliance	Exporting Countries
Aluminum*											> 75%	Jamaica, Brazil, Guinea, Guyana
Chromium											72%	Norway, Japan, China, Canada
Cobalt											78%	South Africa, Kazakhstan, Russia
Copper											35%	Chile, Canada, Mexico
Graphite											100%	China, Mexico, Canada, India
Indium											100%	China, Canada, Republic of Korea, Taiwan
Iron Ore											21%	Canada, Brazil, Republic of Korea
Lead											30%	Canada, Mexico, Republic of Korea, India
Lithium											>25%	Argentina, Chile, China
Manganese											100%	South Africa, Gabon, Australia, Georgia
Molybdenum											<20%	Peru, Chile, Canada, Mexico
Rare Earths**											100%	China, Estonia, Japan, Malaysia
Nickel											47%	Canada, Norway, Australia, Finland
Silver											68%	Mexico, Canada, Peru, Poland
Titanium											86%	Japan, Kazaksran, Ukraine, China, Russia
Vanadium											94%	Austria, Canada, Russia, Republic of Korea
Zinc											87%	Canada, Mexico, Australia, Peru
Total	10	8	2	8	6	11	11	9	8	6		
* Bauxite, ** Neodymium												

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The U.S. is fortunate to have a significant geologic endowment of copper with large copper deposits located in Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration has recently pre-emptively vetoed proposed projects in Alaska and Minnesota, putting two world-class copper deposits off-limits to mining. WMC believes both projects should have been given the opportunity to complete the rigorous federal and state environmental permitting processes to determine whether they could have been developed in a manner that protects the environment.

As a result of these two project vetoes, our ability to source copper and other products in the U.S. has been significantly hampered. The WMC agrees with President Biden's comments regarding manufacturing in his State of the Union address, and agrees that manufacturing should stay in America and grow in America. However, manufacturing relies on the raw materials, such as copper, produced by the mining industry, yet there was no mention of facilitating mining raw materials in the President's speech, which is the precursor to the manufacturing process.

WMC has focused for many years on the Nation's dangerous reliance on imports of critical minerals from foreign countries like China and Russia and the paucity of domestic mineral processing facilities. Today, the need to significantly increase the number of domestic mines, smelters, and refining facilities is more urgent than ever as the Biden Administration implements the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which both require secure, domestic sources of minerals.

WMC is a grassroots organization whose mission is to advocate for today's modern domestic mining industry, which is essential to our Nation. Our membership includes over 200 women who work nationwide in hardrock, coal, and industrial minerals mining and in the energy, manufacturing, transportation, and service industry sectors.

We will be in Washington, D.C. from April 17 – 21 for our annual Fly-In and hope to have the opportunity to meet you and your staff to discuss the importance of strengthening the U.S. hardrock and coal mining sectors to supply the country with the mineral and energy resources needed for national security and our economic and social wellbeing. In the meantime, please contact us at (307) 281-0148 or at wearewmc@wmc-us.org if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Thank you again for your vision in requesting that copper be added to the critical minerals list.

Sincerely yours,



Emily Hendrickson
WMC President



Wanda Burget
WMC Manager

cc: The Honorable Krysten Sinema
The Honorable Mark Kelly
The Honorable Mike Braun
The Honorable Raphael Warnock
The Honorable Mitt Romney